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MEMORIAL.

A Memorial issued by the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia for the Western District, held the nineteenth of First Month, 1898, concerning our deceased friend, WILLIAM U. DITZLER.

William Uhrich Ditzler, son of Christian and Christina Ditzler, was born near Lebanon, in Penna., on the Third of First Month, 1821, and died at his residence near Downingtown, on the second of First Month, 1897, aged nearly seventy-six years.

His father, a tailor by regular occupation, served also at times as a minister in meetings of the Lutheran congregation of his birthplace, which, under the name of the "Church of Mount Zion," had been established under the ministry of his ancestor, who was among the early German immigrants into Pennsylvania. His father was strictly observant of whatever seemed his religious duties, and sought carefully to imbue his children's minds with the teachings of his church. His mother was tenderly concerned for the spiritual blessing of her son,—the more so when she saw, when he

was three years of age, that she must soon depart this life. It is believed that her earnest travail of spirit before her decease, for a blessing on her child, and her strong supplications for his dedication to God and the word of His grace, were signally answered in all the way in which her son was afterwards led.

As nearly as memory can recall a recital sometimes repeated by him, it was in the time of his early boyhood that there came a remarkable deepening of spiritual interest in the congregation of which his family was a part. Such a divine solemnity overspread the meeting, that the singers in the choir could no longer proceed with their stated music. For some four years, as it is understood, the organ was closed, and the worshippers sat often under so holy a covering of Divine power, and that praise which "is silent for Him in Zion," that the intrusion of artificial offerings would be a violence to such communion of the Spirit.

For a few years during his youth he was much confined in or near his home by a lameness which kept him from the usual diversions of boyhood, and gave him much time for thought and meditation. In the fifteenth year of his age he was interested in the attendance of meetings of a Methodist body, called Evangelical Friends. In this period he was revisited

with a clear discovery of his state by nature and the awfulness of sin, to such a degree that he told his father he was "lost." His father called upon the members of his congregation to pray for his distressed boy. At length, in the fullness of time, relief came. William was sitting alone, as was his wont, upon the stones of an old quarry. "This text of Scripture," he writes, "was powerfully applied to my mind: 'The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins;' which was accompanied with such a sweet heavenly sensation, that I did believe that the Lord had passed by my former transgressions, and adopted me amongst his children" Such heavenly light and peace filled his heart that everything inwardly and outwardly, he said, seemed changed as in a moment. So that when he went home he could say, "Now father, I know I am *not* lost!"

His brief written account of this period continues thus: "My father, by this time, heard of my going to the Evangelical Friends, and he began to oppose me and force me to go to the Lutheran Church to be confirmed. I submitted to it, but only attended three times afterwards, and in six months after I joined in full membership with the Evangelical Methodists, which exasperated my father so much that

he took me away from school. * * * In consequence of this I lost a large share of learning."

While sitting before the large open fire-place one day, about this time, he saw a panorama, as he expressed it, of his history for the coming half century. It seemed to start with laying aside his crutches and leaving his father's house to travel alone upon unknown roads to a great city, which appeared clearly before him, with its many streets, houses and steeples; where he would live, moving in and out as a minister of the everlasting gospel. All this seemed more than he could believe; so that he exclaimed (in his native German), "Impossible! Impossible!" which his father overhearing, inquired the cause.

It had long been the cherished purpose of his father and friends, to see William follow in the footsteps of his ancestors for some generations, as a minister of the gospel. This had been his purpose in placing his son in such a line of studies as was deemed preparatory to that service. From time to time the spirituality of the gospel dispensation was becoming unfolded to the boy's mind, including the nature of Christ's baptism as the true successor of that of John, by water, under the old dispensation; and the new and spiritual communion as the true advance beyond the passover-form

with bread and wine. Other forms, like the saying of "grace" at meals, confirmation, and stated exercises as worship were growing more and more questionable to him, save when freshly proceeding in the newness of the Spirit.

One day, while standing at a railroad station, he observed at the window of a train of cars, as it stopped, a man and two women in a peculiar garb, which called forth his inquiry who they were. He was told they were some Quakers from Philadelphia: that they did not believe in water baptism, paid ministry, war, etc. A desire at once sprang up in his mind to know more of such people, who held views of the Christian religion of which he was already secretly persuaded.

His radical difference from his father's views concerning the so-called sacraments became in due time manifest. Stringent measures were taken to bring him into conformity with the practice of his church, but without avail. Intercourse with others was cut of, by solitary confinement for a whole week or more, to give him an opportunity to come to what was deemed a right mind on that question. No arguments, fears, or persuasions, could change his adherence to the purely spiritual aspect of Christ's doctrine.

At length he felt that his true home lay in

the direction where the drawings of Truth seemed to lead him. He found his way, with some interruptions, to Philadelphia, when about nineteen years of age. There very soon he beheld men and women in the garb in which Friends were first presented to his view. He followed them till he found himself sitting in their meeting for worship. He was so impressed with the reality of true worship in that silent waiting, that he mentally exclaimed: "This meeting is my meeting, and this people is my people!"

His own account of this meeting has lately been found in the hand-writing of a valued Friend, to whom its correct expression in our language may be due: "Some time past I went to a Friends' or Quakers' Meeting, where I saw a number of people sitting together in silence, with which I was very much struck. Many of them appeared to be gathered into a state of holy introversion from every earthly object, and the countenances of many of them evinced that they held communion with God. My spirit was much refreshed (though there was no word spoken), which made me desire to go again. The next time I went, a man Friend stood up, I may say, as some said of Christ formerly, 'as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' This induced me to

inquire more particularly into their doctrines and mode of worship. I afterwards understood that they made it their business in meeting to gather into the name of Christ, in order to feel his power and blessed presence, to influence them in all their religious services. This they consider a necessary requisite for a gospel minister, in order to enable him to speak in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and to baptize the hearers so that they may be strengthened and edified together."

After this, in the middle of the week as well as on First-days, he steadily attended the meetings of Friends. He found employment at a tailoring-shop kept by a party who had no sympathy with his mid-week attendance of meetings. They withheld his day's pay, one dollar, for every instance of his attending the Fourth-day meeting. This did not deter him from the regular practice, and he would return from his two-hours absence and faithfully work the remaining hours of the day. Interested fellow-boarders found for him a better situation; and he eventually, under a guiding and over-ruling Providence, became largely blessed in means.

A time came when, in one of these meetings, he was drawn to kneel in the solemn exercise

of prayer, which was uttered in the German tongue. A Friend who understood the words, described them as of a very touching character. Elders in the meeting began to manifest an increased interest in his course, by counselling his private use of the English Bible instead of his Luther's version, and directing his reading in the standard writings of Friends.

After coming of age his exercise of mind in view of applying to be received into membership in our religious Society, was deep and anxious. In earnest meditation concerning this step, he would sometimes be walking in his room or in the open air till the early hours of morning. After he had left the question in the hands of the meeting, his heart was peacefully lightened, as if all the responsibility was lifted from him. It was some three years before he was formerly received into membership. Time was thus taken to witness the stability of his purpose, and the sureness of his growth in the Truth.

His father, after some years, became reconciled to his son's course, and at length visited him and the daughters then residing in Philadelphia. The father's death soon afterwards occurring, his remains were laid in his son's lot, beside the spot reserved for William himself, in Friends' Southwestern Burial Ground.

The innocent, earnest, and devout character of the lad, early endeared him to such elders and concerned Friends as Jane Johnson, H. Regina Shober, Marmaduke C. and Sarah W. Cope, Thomas Wistar, and Mary Ann Lloyd, who were warmly interested to watch over him for good. One day he was sitting in the parlor of the latter, when Stephen Grellet came in, to whom the young man was introduced. On being soon left alone with him, Stephen Grellet's mouth was opened in a flow of prophetic ministry, encouraging William to look neither to the right nor to the left in following the high calling which was before him in the ministry of the everlasting gospel.

In the interest of righteousness he obtained interviews at times before two successive Archbishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Philadelphia,—always insisting that he should testify to his homage of God rather than of the creature, by appearing in their presence without removing his hat.

He also paid a noteworthy visit to the present mayor of the city soon after his entrance into office. After some interchange of kindly words, a silence came upon them, and at length our dear friend opened his mouth in testimony for the righteousness which exalteth a nation, and against sin, its true reproach. And he set

forth the high future in store for his hearer, should he maintain his integrity and be faithful to the Divine witness in his heart. Under a solemn and feeling intercession for a blessing upon the Executive of so great a city, the few present were bowed as in the Divine presence. The mayor has since taken occasion to acknowledge his appreciation of the grace of love shown in such a man; and the present Archbishop has born similar testimony.

While a young man and in middle life, William U. Ditzler's time, outside of business hours, was largely occupied in visiting the poor and distressed in the slums of the city, and in teaching them, as he had opportunity and message, the word and way of life. He became a familiar figure in these haunts of misery during the night season, and way was always made for him even by the most degraded; who offered him no violence, but viewed him with respect as a man of God. He was especially faithful as a visitor to the prisoners in the Eastern Penitentiary, and further instances could be recounted of the influence of his labor there.

But to return to the earlier period, we note that after his admission into our religious Society, he yielded to occasional requirements for vocal offering in meetings for worship. His

use of the English language improved as he grew in faithfulness and in grace, and his utterances became more and more marked by life, weight and solemnity. His gift in the ministry was acknowledged, and was at length recorded by his Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in the year 1867, when he was forty-six years of age. His vocal appearances in his own meeting never became frequent; but, when offered, they were singularly impressive, awakening and reaching to the witness for truth in men's hearts, as a gospel trumpet giving no uncertain sound. During these earnest engagements and in the solemn silence which followed, meetings would seem covered as with the Wing of ancient goodness; and many there were, who, in departing to their homes, would say: "Truly, God hath not forgotten his people!" Especially under his devout exercise in vocal prayer, was there a manifest overshadowing of the Divine anointing. The holy solemnity spread as from heart to heart, while the savor of strong supplication in the Spirit ascended, bowing the congregation under a sense of the majesty of the King of Heaven.

The life and power of his ministry and its enlargement was more especially witnessed during the visits to neighborhoods away from the city. His first travelling in the service of

the gospel was performed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, mostly during the year 1868. Its progress was a severe trial of his faith and of his dedication. Besides being inexperienced in this mode of service he had the disadvantage of being comparatively unknown, and subjected to misunderstandings arising from a condition of anxiety then subsisting in our religious Society. Through all apparent obstacles a way was made, to his own admiration and the satisfaction of the visited. On one occasion when refused admission to a house, a holy boldness empowered him to claim entrance and lodging. Before he left it, the hearts of the heads of the family were tendered and contrited under the power of gospel love and faithfulness. At one place, having mounted a horse-block in front of a building, while his companion, a minister, was engaged within it, he preached with power to the assembled out-door company; and a remarkable religious awakening in that neighborhood is said to have followed this meeting. Various visits, for which he obtained minutes from his Monthly Meeting, included labor with mill-hands and operatives, prisoners and inmates of charitable institutions, westward as far as Columbus, Ohio, and eastward to the sea-coast of New Jersey.

At a meeting appointed in a schoolhouse a man was present whose boast it was to break up religious meetings. His mockery of the speaker's voice was subdued on this occasion, by a power felt while under a solemn silence the speaker stood in the midst of his sermon. Feeling this man's state as a burden on his mind, William, accompanied by the ministering Friend with whom he was travelling, and by an elder, drove early in the morning to the man's residence, and overtaking him as he was proceeding to his work, induced him to enter his dwelling, and, together with his wife in the midst of her laundry appliances, listen to the exercise for their soul's welfare which burdened the Friends' minds. Before these left the room, both the man who had seemed so hardened, and his wife, were on their knees with contrited hearts begging for Divine mercy.

While engaged in preaching to the assembled prisoners at Reading, Pa., several men and women from the town being also present, he made some attempts to use his customary expression, "My brethren and sisters;" but felt a stop in his mind before reaching the word "sisters." In one instance near the end he succeeded in saying, "My brethren and sister;" but was prevented by the same check from uttering the last of the words in the plural

as "sisters." At the close of the meeting several who knew, as he did not, that among the four hundred in the audience, some of them women, there was but *one* female prisoner, expressed their admiration at his preservation in the Truth. His only explanation could be, that it was by simply minding his Guide.

This quickness of understanding in the fear of the Lord to heed the constraints and restraints of inward instruction, served him better than worldly wisdom in much of his daily walk and conversation. On one occasion having dined with his sister in the southern part of the city, notwithstanding her entreaties and the appearance of rain, he felt he must walk instead of taking the street-car to his place of business. On the way he was addressed by a young woman who, observing his garb, asked if he was not a "Quaker Friend." Assured that he was, she proceeded to give an account of herself as the daughter of a Florida general, and having come north to study. As they were about parting near his place of business, she said, "Perhaps you will not approve of my object in studying. I am taking lessons in elocution to qualify me as an actress for the stage." His answer was, "Oh! I am sorry for that. My young friend, if thou pursue this course, darkness will be thy portion. But

'they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever.'" Some two weeks afterward she entered his office, and told him that those words had been ringing in her ears ever since; and she had found no peace until she had resolved to give up her prospect of the stage, and to devote her life, though much against her parent's views, to the good of benighted natives in a foreign land. At length he received a letter from her written in Siam, showing that she was there engaged in what she believed was her mission.

During part of one summer season, while his foreman would be gone out to dinner, he felt drawn day after day to go to a desk at the rear of his shop, and there at an open window to read aloud passages from the Bible. This seemed a singular proceeding for him. He had never done this before, and never did so since that season. Several weeks afterward a well known Episcopalian minister came into this room and informed William that he had been the means of saving one of his parishioners. William could not see how or when. "Were you not in the habit last summer," said the visitor, "of reading aloud by your back window, passages from the holy Scriptures?" "I was," he answered. "Yes," replied the minister, "and there was, in one of the

rooms above, a young woman in the state of decline, with whom all my labors for the turning of her heart to God were without effect. She would have nothing to do with religion or pious advice. At length she heard your voice ringing out upon the air in passages of Scripture. Day after day she listened intently to your readings of the Bible. A deep impression was made on her conscience, and she at length gave up to repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and she died in the peace of redeeming love."

His firm confidence in the clear openings of Truth on his mind, seemed one of his strongest traits. He must see a truth for himself before he would adopt it; and that which the Witness for truth in his heart had once shown him, was invincible to argument or persuasions of men. It is not to be supposed that the same tenacity of mind would always escape a holding of erroneous ideas or ways, for he was not exempt from human error.

His daily vocation was not pursued entirely for gain, but also for the employment of others, and to give him a central stand in the city for what he regarded as a daily-mission service. Thither men of all persuasions loved to resort, ministers of various denominations, concerned Friends of his own fellowship, and young men

and women needing fatherly sympathy and counsel, all held by the charm of his interest in them, and even at times by blessing of his reproof. Through all his conversation there was an exaltation of the spirit above the letter, of faith above discouragement, of generosity above prejudice, of the heavens above the earth. Several ministers of other denominations are believed to have had the spiritual quality of their teaching improved, through the new light in which, in these interviews, they saw the gospel dispensation presented. And it is believed that not a few young Friends learned to regard him as a nursing father, and in the type of religion which he represented, they recognized a living argument for Quakerism.

In the year 1874, William U. Ditzler feeling that his service in Western District Monthly Meeting had ceased, and that a Divine call was extended to him to transfer his membership to Uwchlan Monthly Meeting, moved to a residence which he purchased near Downingtown, Pa., and thenceforward labored faithfully for the spiritual welfare of the meeting and people of that neighborhood, yet coming almost daily to his usual occupation in Philadelphia. Seals to his ministry were manifest in that place, and the church was in a marked degree edified. At length, aware that he had

for twelve years expended the most earnest labors of his life-time in the meeting at Downingtown and that he was now excused from further service therein, he felt that the Lord had need of him in his former meeting in Philadelphia. His certificate of removal was granted in 1887, and he was sincerely welcomed back to the meeting which had been his first home in our religious Society. Notwithstanding he continued his residence in his Downingtown home, he came thirty miles to his meetings for worship in the city on First-day mornings, as regularly as to his secular business on week-days. His service in the meeting was largely in silence, but dignified with devotion and solemnity, bearing impressive testimony to that worship and communion which is in spirit and in truth. His vocal offerings in supplication were notable in demonstrating the genuineness and power of true public prayer.

Almost as an evening sacrifice, in the year 1889, he felt drawn in gospel love to revisit those meetings in New Jersey which he had earliest visited, and also many of the prisons and charitable institutions within the borders of this Yearly Meeting. This service was continued at times during four years, to evident comfort, edifying and awakening in many

parts of the field. On one day, besides the journey to New York and return, he was exercised in gospel labor in the Friends' meeting and in three separate mission places of that city. During a visit within the limits of Delaware County, Pa., he heard that a certain tavern was the headquarters of a fox-hunting association, in which many men of the surrounding country had an interest. A concern at once fell on him to hold a meeting at that house for the good of that class of people. Attempts were made from time to time to arrange for such a meeting, but no way seemed to open to bring about an opportunity. After some two years word was brought to him that the proprietor of the hotel had died and his funeral would be held on the morrow. William Ditzler at once felt that this was his long-deferred opportunity. He proceeded to the place, and found that the priest who was expected to conduct the services, was prevented from coming. Our friend occupied a period of the delay in a tendering service with the widow and family in their private room. Another minister being obtained, he consented for William to occupy a short time after the close of the stated service. When the opportunity arrived, and the new voice began to be heard, all that could crowd into the hall-way

and rooms from out-of-doors at once flocked in, and stood as it were amazed at the demonstration of the spirit and of power in which the gospel message rang forth for their warning and turning from the power of Satan unto God, and unto Him that taketh away the sin of the world. When he ceased, the minister embraced him with joy for the Divine visitation, the crowd respectfully parted to let him go forth, and a solemn impression is spoken of as abiding among the people for days. Some who were present came on the next First-day to his regular meeting for worship in the city, and occasionally men of that class have stopped him on the street to acknowledge somewhat of the impression made on their feelings upon that occasion.

During the period of these labors he was prostrated with a severe attack of pneumonia. His physician, when he had seen the fever pass what was deemed the fatal mark, took an opportunity to say to him, "If you have anything to say, say it; or to sign, sign it." To his surprise his patient began afterwards to recover. The doctor declared to him, "This unexpected turn for the better is due to your simple and temperate habits of life. You never took alcoholic drinks, you never chewed nor smoked tobacco, you have never been in-

dulgent of appetite. Had any of these been your practice, you could not have survived the violence of this attack. Your pure and clean life has saved you." But William U. Ditzler had seen in his sickness a vision of a further-extended time before him which he must occupy for other's good. While never free from much bodily infirmity after his illness, he was especially a sufferer during the last two years of his life in consequence of a severe accident.

He bore his daily sufferings with great fortitude, continuing when possible his regular journeys to his city store, constantly waiving his own sense of pain, and hiding his exercises on behalf of those near and dear to him, that in self forgetfulness he might enter into the states and troubles of those who so much resorted to his society. At length a final attack of pneumonia laid him low, and after a week passed mostly in apparent unconsciousness, he passed away from works, it is believed to the rewards enjoyed by those, who, having turned many to righteousness, shine as the stars forever and ever.

The foregoing incidents in the life of our valued Friend have been adduced to show, not the merit of the creature, but the sufficiency of Divine grace for man, when heeded. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,

saith the Lord of Hosts." It is not to intellectual ability or culture, that his life and power in the ministry can be ascribed, but it was his childlike trust in the immediate and perceptible direction of the Spirit of Christ. This gave him success in word or in work, only as it was permitted to prevail. His eye was kept remarkably single to this guidance, in the love and patience of Christ, whose gentleness made him great. It invested and imbued him with a rare sweetness of spirit and a tender sympathy of heart to such a degree that even the worldly minded took knowledge of him that he was with Jesus. That single and steadfast adherence to the inward and Holy Witness, which was the characteristic of his career, is essential, as he believed, to bring the church of his choice, as it did his own life, out of the wilderness, and give it once more that shining place among men, of which his life was an instance.

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